

Remarks/Arguments:

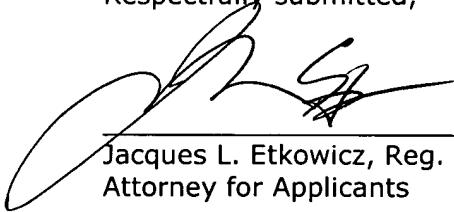
Claims 1-17 are pending. Claims 15-17 stand rejected. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that claims 1-14 are allowed.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action at page 2, paragraph 3 sets forth "Claims 15-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,556,888 to McNaul." Although applicants do not agree with the rejection based on the overly broad interpretation of McNaul, in order to expedite prosecution, applicants have cancelled claims 15-17 without prejudice. Applicants reserve the right to reintroduce claims 15-17 at a later time.

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth above, applicants submit that the above-identified is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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The Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge payment to Deposit Account No. 18-0350 of any fees associated with this communication.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail, with sufficient postage, in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on: January 20, 2004

Maryanne E. Coulson

